

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Starke County Courthouse

and/or common Same

**2. Location**

street & number Courthouse Square

N/A not for publication

city, town Knox N/A vicinity of

state Indiana code 018 county Starke code 149

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Starke County Commissioners

street & number Starke County Courthouse

city, town Knox N/A vicinity of state Indiana 46534

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Starke County Courthouse, Recorder's Office

street & number Washington Street

city, town Knox state Indiana 46534

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes ☒ no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town state

## 7. Description

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved      date

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Starke County Courthouse was erected in 1897, designed by Fort Wayne architects Wing and Mahurin, and built by Caldwell and Drake, of Columbus, Indiana. It is located in the courthouse square, which is bounded by Washington, Main, Mound and Pearl Streets.

The three-story Richardsonian Romanesque courthouse is constructed of Indiana Oolitic limestone and terra cotta, and has a tiled, hipped roof. The building's height, including the clock tower, is 138 feet. The layout follows a Greek cross plan, with the massive clock tower located at the roof's center.

The courthouse's main facade, the south elevation, is three bays wide, with a central pavilion that terminates in a wall dormer. (Photo 1.) The one-story entryway projects, and is constructed with massive rock-faced stone block that is used exclusively on the ground level of the building. The entrance is set within a finely engraved, broad segmental arch that appears to spring from ornamental visage medallions. The original paired wood doors have yielded to modern replacements which are flanked by single windows framed by stone mullions. Three lights are contained in the entrance's arched transom. A balustraded balcony, underscored by a corbel table, spans the one-story entry and features pedestal-mounted gargoyle light fixtures which are located at each corner. Above the balcony is a two and one-half story round-arched window, divided vertically into three bays by stone mullions. Double-hung windows are located on the second and third stories, with ornamented spandrel panels between floors. Above the third story windows is a row of square lights, followed by another row of square lights, and topped by lights that fit within the round arch. The arch itself is compound, with dressed stone piers that have carved capitals, which act as springers for the rock-faced stone arch. The archivolt has a pointed peak, which reaches up to a decorated, louvered opening in the wall dormer. The dormer has a fractable gable. The surface of the wall dormer is rock-faced stone, laid in alternating wide and narrow courses.

Flanking the central pavilion on this facade are single bays, each with a pair of windows below a broad, round arch at the ground level. The rock-faced stone at the ground floor level slopes inward to meet the dressed stone water table between the first and second floors. Above the water table the walls are of rock-faced stone, with alternating courses of wider and narrower stones. The second story has single rectangular, double-hung windows, with ornamented spandrel panels separating them from the windows on the third floor. Although the third floor double-hung windows are round-arched, their heads are Gothic-arched, with rock-faced voussoirs and ornate springers. Four pilasters are located on the facade, at each corner and flanking the central pavilion. Corbelled stone and plain molding form the cornice, above which are two more courses of stone. The roofline is decorated with square stone pinnacles above each pilaster.

Also facing south on either side of the main facade are recessed single bays, which are treated similarly to the bays flanking the central pavilion, except that the ground floor windows are single, rectangular, double-hung sash, rather than the arched configuration found on the main facade.

From the center of the red, clay-tiled roof rises the square clock tower, which is best described as having two distinct parts that are separated by a cornice and balustrade resembling the balcony over the main entrance. The lower section continues the building's upper story stonework. Each of the lower section's faces contains paired, deepset, compound, round-arched windows, divided horizontally into four lights. The springers are decorated, and from the lower corners of the cornice spring gargoyle-like sculptures.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	community planning	landscape architecture	religion	
1400-1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law	science	
1500-1599	agriculture	economics	literature	sculpture	
1600-1699	X architecture	education	military	social	
1700-1799	art	engineering	music	humanitarian	
X 1800-1899	commerce	exploration/settlement	philosophy	theater	
1900-	communications	industry	X politics government	transportation	
		invention		other (specify)	

Specific dates 1897

Builder/Architect Caldwell and Drake/Wing and Mahurin

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Starke County Courthouse is significant for its Richardsonian Romanesque architecture, designed by the firm of John F. Wing and Marshall S. Mahurin, of Fort Wayne, and for its role as the seat of county government for the past 89 years.

The partnership of Wing and Mahurin dates from 1881 with the firm designing a number of prominent buildings, including the Hancock and Monroe County Courthouses, the City Halls of Fort Wayne and Kokomo, and the Riley school in Greenfield, and St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne.

The building was constructed in 1897 by contractors George W. Caldwell and Lester Drake, of Columbus, Indiana. Caldwell and Drake are best known for the West Baden Springs Hotel which, at that time, had the largest dome in the world, and for the Palace of Agriculture at the St. Louis World's Fair, which was the largest building ever constructed under one roof at the time of its execution. The building is a fine example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style, one of many Wing and Mahurin buildings in this style. Characteristic features include the rock-faced stone, heavy massing, broad arches, and steeply pitched, hipped roof.

The building is the third county courthouse and is significant for its being the seat of county government for nearly 90 years. A wooden structure was utilized when Knox became the county seat in 1850, being replaced with a larger, brick building in 1858. The present structure was finished in 1898 at a cost of \$130,000, and is the oldest civic building in the county.

The building continues to serve the Starke County community. The courthouse presently contains the offices for zoning, health, the Council on Aging, the Court Clerk, the law library, the Jury room, Probation, and Judges' Chambers, and the courtrooms.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see continuation sheet

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.6 acres

Quadrangle name Knox East, Indiana

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

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5	3	1	6	0	0
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4	5	7	1	7	8	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The Starke County Courthouse is bounded by Washington, Main, Mound, and Pearl Streets

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ronald Merriam, Past President

organization Starke County Historical Society date April, 1986

street & number 207 East State Street telephone 219/896-2629

city or town North Judson state Indiana 46366

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Richard Hart, Jr. for Mr. Pedersen*

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

date Aug. 21, 1986

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

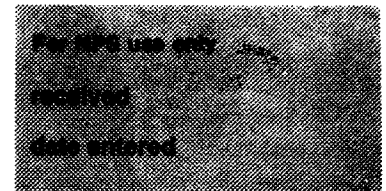
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
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Continuation sheet Starke County Courthouse      Item number 7 and 9      Page 1

The arcaded upper section, the clock tower proper, is constructed of dressed, coursed ashlar and has a high, hipped roof. The center two of the four open, round arches of the arcade are recessed and are framed by a shallow blind arch that extends up into the wall dormers and houses a clock face. The central arch has a dressed stone archivolt from which rises a decorative relief at its apex. The two open arches flanking the central arches are taller, and have archivolts, as well as projecting springers. On either side of the wall dormer, the cornice is corbelled as on the main building.

The treatment of the clock tower's roof, wall dormer coping, and ridge roll follows that found on the courthouse proper.

The courthouse interior, which has recently been partially refurbished, features both hardwood and ceramic-tiled floors, plaster and panel wall treatments, and ornate cornice and pilaster capitals. The staircase is accented by ornamental iron balusters, marble steps, and a patriotic ceiling painting of Liberty located between the first and second floors. Ionic capitals, with polychromed gilding, eagle, and shield are found on hall columns and pilasters.

The courthouse lawn is landscaped with trees and shrubs and is surrounded by a coping of limestone that also edges the entry walks. Mounted cannons flank the main, south entrance and on the southwest corner is located the granite and limestone Starke County war memorial.

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Item number 9

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McCormick, Chester A. McCormick's Guide to Starke County. 1902.

Richman, George J. History of Hancock County, Indiana. 1916. Greenfield, IN: Mitchell Publishing Company.

Standard History of Starke County, Indiana, A. Vol. 1. Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1915.

Starke County Centennial, 1850-1950. Published by the Starke County Democrat.

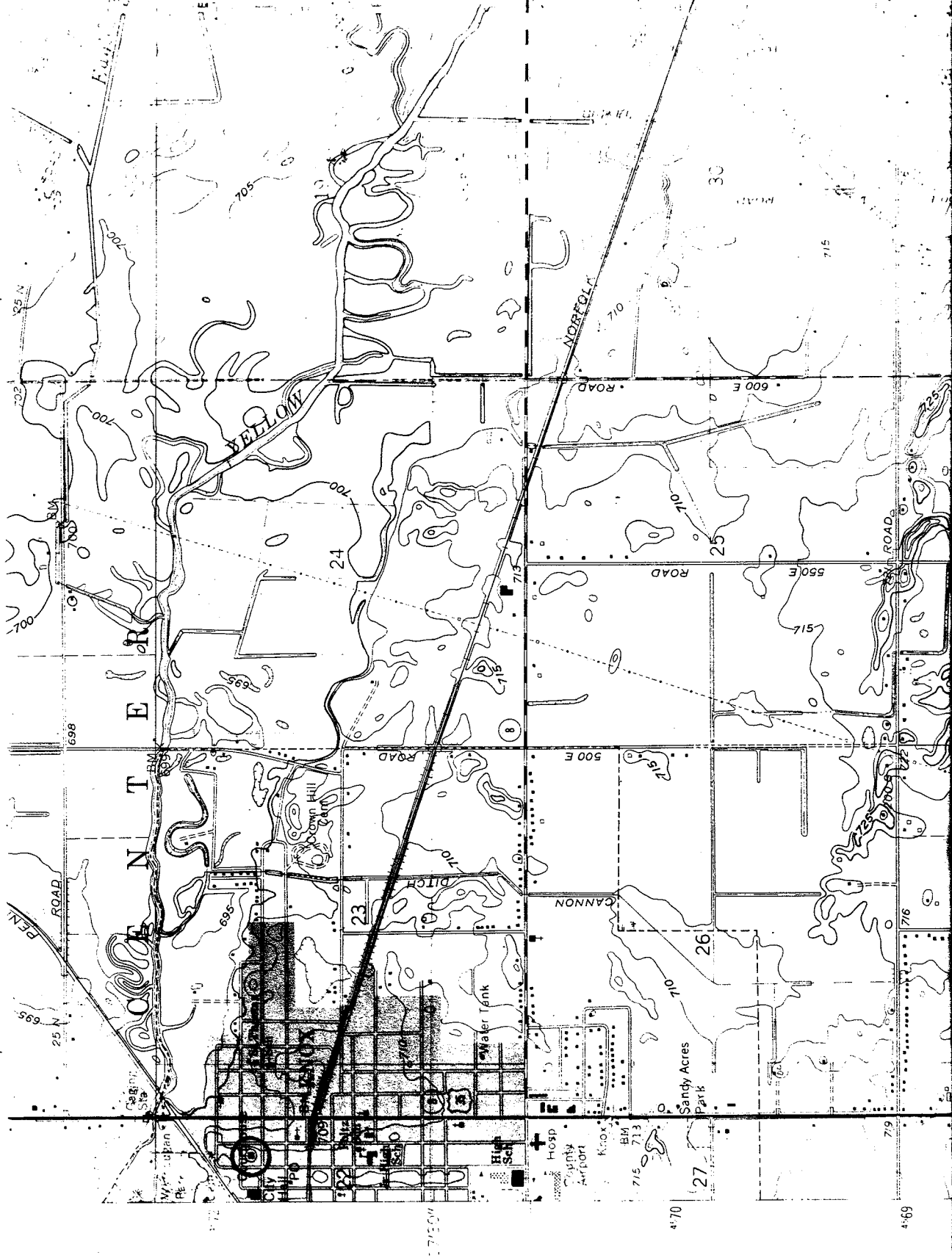
Courthouse Records

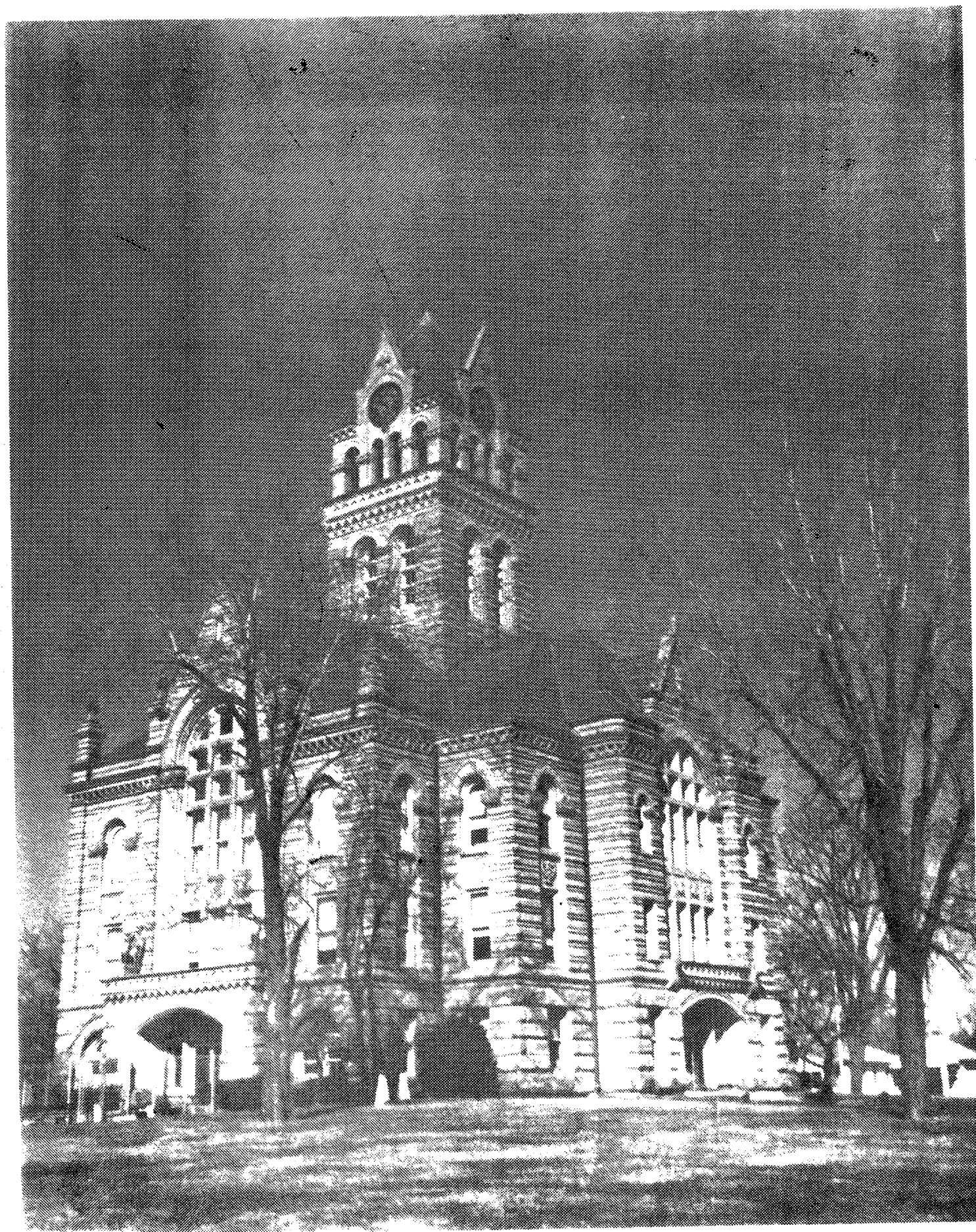
Original blueprint of building.

Stark County Courthouse

know, I didn't

### ITEM Reference:





Starke County Courthouse  
Knox, Indiana  
Ronald Merriam, Photographer  
April, 1984  
Negative, 207 E. State North Judson  
South East Corner of Courthouse  
Looking Northwest  
Photograph One of two





Starke County Courthouse  
Knox, Indiana  
Ronald Merriam, Photographer  
April, 1984  
Negative, 207 E. State North Judson  
East Side of Courthouse  
Looking West  
Photograph two of two